The

THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

The Thoreau Society, Inc., is an informal gathering of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Mr. G. Russell Ready, Berwick, Ont., president; Mr. Robert Needham, Concord, Mass., vice-president; and Walter Harding, State Univ. College, Geneseo, N.Y., secretary-treasurer. Annual membership, $2.00; life membership, $25.00. Address communications to the secretary.

BULLETIN NINETY-SIX SUMMER, 1966

THOREAU'S RETURN TO CONCORD by Raymond Adams

There may be colleges that are still ivory towers. But a modern state university is not one of them. And as state universities go, particularly as state universities in the South go, the one in Chapel Hill has lost whatever retreat quality the onetime village and university on the edge of a forest ever had. So I come from a place that has its full share of beatnicks and protesters and hunger strikers and sitters-in. They quote Thoreau until I am almost sorry that Henry Thoreau ever decided to raise a beard, for they seem to want to emulate him in that as well as in his ideas of the effectiveness of civil disobedience. I wish sometimes that they would read more of Thoreau than the essay on civil disobedience. If they would read Walden until they get well into the second chapter, they would come upon this sentence which I warmly recommend to them--and the warmer the more I recommend it: "I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did."

The civil disobedience, which concerned itself with segregation and discrimination and was therefore closely allied in racial motive to Thoreau's own civil disobedience, was an effective protest and a fruitful one. Moreover, it was an honest one, for honest civil disobedience is a disobedience of the supposedly unjust law for which the conscientious disobeyer will willingly accept the penalty which the law prescribes. Thoreau willingly, almost insistently, went to jail more to the discomfort of Sam Staples, the jailer, than to his own discomfort. And our students quite as willingly went to jail and filled the court docket by the score or by the hundred. They entered the courthouse in the way Mark Twain imagined traitors entered the tremendous Traitors' Gate at the Tower of London: "They marched traitors in twelve abreast." I think our Chapel Hill objectors had more effect on our municipality than the London traitors had on theirs, for Chapel Hill soon became the model of a desegregated town in North Carolina,-- not perfect yet, but a model that the other towns in the state have not equalled.

Civil disobedience is one thing; the sit-in is another. The one is passive, like Thoreau's simply doing nothing about paying that tax; the other is more active, even aggressive, a kind of trespass. Now that the sit-in has established itself, almost worn itself out, as a method, not that no new idea can be projected in that direction, perhaps those who used that device will be interested to know that Thoreau used the sit-in technique also. He went down to Harvard College and sat in the President's office until he persuaded that official that an alumnus who lived in Concord should be allowed to borrow books from the college library on the same terms as one who lived in Cambridge or Boston, for Concord had become as near in time to Harvard by train as Boston was by horse-car or onmibus or by one-horse shay

Actually, Thoreau didn't invent either sit-ins or civil disobedience. Those ideas came from farther east and long ago--maybe from India, maybe from the Bible. It is more scholarly and probably more accurate to trace the ideas back to India; but it is more whimsical and more fun, and maybe not entirely inaccurate, to think that they might have come from the Bible. Thoreau knew his Bible very well. If he disregarded the church a good deal, he did not disregard nor fail to quote the Bible. Indeed, he disregarded the church because the church was disregarding the Bible. However, that may be, it is nice to fancy that the sit-in at Harvard succeeded because President Quincy also knew his Bible and, looking at Thoreau sitting-in in the office, recalled two verses from Luke where a judge says, "Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming." Or he may have remembered a passage five chapters earlier, "Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needeth." I like to think that President Quincy wrote to the librarian, "Give him as many books as he needeth."

I am yielding to the same shift of emphasis toward the civil disobedience matter that I intended to criticize somewhat. I have no apologies for doing that. We ought to be enthusiastic about that contribution of Thoreau's to our time. I am not going to leave it even now, for it presents a fascinating culmination of influence. People knew, of course, about the jailing. Henry Thoreau with his Dunbar flair for the dramatic had seen to that. But I doubt that many people read his tightly knit argument of political theory in his essay when it appeared in Elizabeth Peabody's Aesthetic Papers in 1849. The appearance of Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers as the latter two-thirds of A Yankee in Canada in 1866 didn't create a great stir either. Those papers were mis-timed in 1866. The war was over; slavery as such had been abolished; reforms had been accomplished so recently that these essays had no historical interest yet. They came to the few who read them as an anti-climax. The year 1866 was just about the worst of all years to print anti-slavery essays.

But, if the timing was bad, the gathering of

those ten papers (one not Thoreau's) into the last of the volumes edited in the decade of Thoreau's death was fortunate. When the timing became good--in England twenty-four years later--the essays lay ready, and Mr. Salt could publish five of them in the little red book of less than 150 pages that nudged the world forward in the twentieth century. For it was this little red book that came to the attention of Gandhi, and it was Gandhi who really made known the method of civil disobedience which returned to America in our time to help the Negro, not out of slavery, but out of an aftermath of slavery that was dragging on interminably. Slowly, and by a route that led half way around the world and back, timely in one situation and then another, Thoreau's civil disobedience, which had had almost no effect in his own time, culminated in a profound effect in our time toward what we hope may be the conclusion of the reform which was only beginning when he went to jail and wrote his essay.

What I really started to say was that a good many things that started with Thoreau here in Concord had their culmination far afield and long afterward. In this sense as well as in matters of the phenomena of nature he "traveled much in Concord." He found here in Concord early examples on a small scale of issues that grew in significance as time went on. There was a little--almost homey--jail here in the center of the village. Here in the village there was a neighbor and friend who had undertaken to collect the poll tax, to be in that small unpopular way the representative of the American government; and of him Thoreau wrote:

> I meet this American government, or its representative, the state government, directly, and face to face, once a year--no more--in the person of its tax-gatherer; this is the only mode in which a man situated as I am necessarily meets it; and it then says distinctly, Recognize me; and the simplest, the most effectual, and in the present posture of affairs, the indispensablest mode of treating with it on this head, of expressing your little satisfaction with it and love for it, is to deny it then. My civil neighbor, the tax-gatherer, is the very man I have to deal with--for it is, after all, with men and not with parchment that I quarrel--and he has voluntarily chosen to be an agent of the government. How shall he ever know well what he is and does as an officer of the government, or as a man, until he is obliged to consider whether he shall treat me, his neighbor, for whom he has respect, as a neighbor and well-disposed man, or as a maniac and disturber of the peace, and see if he can get over this obstruction to his neighborliness without a ruder and more impetuous thought or speech corresponding with his action.

So here in Concord was the little jail and here in Concord was the American government in the person of a well-disposed neighbor. One didn't have to go to Washington, or to Boston even, to meet the American government; one could travel in Concord and meet it one afternoon as one left the cobbler's shop. A principle was involved; and it was just as much involved along the Milldam between one neighbor who was the taxed and another neighbor who was the tax-gatherer as if it had been between the petitioning populace and the entire establishment in Washington. Thoreau knew this. One sentence farther on in the passage I have just quoted says, "For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be; what is once well done is done forever."

Consider another issue that for Thoreau began here in Concord, was reported to his Concord neighbors in his lectures and then in Walden, that localized book intended to wake his neighbors up, and became crucial as an issue after Walden and after Thoreau's time. This is the issue which we call commercialism. Admittedly, this had been an issue long before Thoreau went to Walden Pond or wrote his book. The effects of industrialization had been a horror that engaged a good many thinkers before Thoreau's time. Carlyle had labored with it. Robert Owen had experimented with it. And a score of cooperative communities across America had tried to solve it before Thoreau became a "community of one" at Walden. No one can claim that Henry Thoreau pioneered in this matter as he perhaps did in the matter of civil disobedience. Even while Thoreau was at Walden, Emerson was writing in his "Ode Inscribed to W. H. Channing" that

> "Things are in the saddle,
> And ride mankind."

because, as he said in another line, "Things are of the snake." meaning not only that materialism has something intrinsically evil about it, but that an interest in things is as old as the temptation of Adam and is certain to last until the millennium.

Again, Thoreau "travelled much in Concord" and in his travels met with the problems not only of eternal materialism but of industrialism also. Concord wasn't manufacturing much (though he could have mentioned pencils); but he did specify one productive enterprise in the town, the exporting of Walden ice, which should have been enormously profitable, for the raw materials (water) cost nothing and the processing (freezing) was done at no charge by Winter himself. This was profit making carried to a high degree, an archetypal example of exploitation and business acumen. Thoreau found it literally at his own doorstep. Across the Pond he saw the other example, the railway, which had used the lives--the time and strength--of his neighboring Irishmen and Yankeemen in laying its track and then had abandoned the workers beside the right of way just as it had abandoned the shack from which Thoreau got boards for his house.

There is no more memorable passage in Walden than that one about the sleepers who laid the track and who were as unaware of being exploited as were the wooden "sleepers" they laid in the ballast under the rails. Nor do I know a more bitter passage about the insensitivity of corporations than in that very passage about the sleepers. As he wrote, "When they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception." Think of that sentence: "a supernumerary sleeper"-- a superfluous person, an average man, unaware in his innocence of the implications of modern life; "in the wrong position" --an upright man presumably good and respected but, from the corporation's point of view, in the wrong position, for he was not under the track (under the thumb) of the corporation; when they kill him, "they suddenly stop the cars," making a great hypocritical show of concern about one man after having been unconcerned about the multitude of men who meekly stayed in the right position under the rails; and "make a hue and cry about it," not the corporation, but the public, all the other super-

numerary sleepers, make a hue and cry about it, for they are unable to comprehend the evil all around them day by day but can be aroused momentarily by a flamboyant demonstration, for this was no workman, this was an upright man, a neighbor, probably crossing to where he lived on the right side of the tracks.

What interests me is that Thoreau, drawing on the simple life out on his edge of the town of Concord rather than on the mills of Lawrence and Lowell or the commerce of Boston, found in the exporting of ice and the laying of one of the earliest railways material for those bitter comments on most of our commercial problems in the century since. As with civil disobedience, here in Concord, one of the least likely places in the 1840's, he found illustrated in a small way a principle that could be applied after his time to our industrial nation. The lesson of Walden was never missed; but it came to be applied with a different emphasis. One could not overlook the call in the book to simplify one's life by reducing one's wants and one's desire for things. One could not overlook the call to return to nature and to live "as deliberately as Nature." But one could overlook the comments on corporations and profits and the docility of labor.

When the country had developed a complicated corporate life with almost unbearable tensions brought on by unrelieved commercialism there was Walden ready to relieve some of those tensions. It is no accident that Walden began to come into its own just as commercialism began to come into its dominance. And it is no accident either that Walden flowed from the commercial presses in a multitude of editions when commercialism flowed into virtually every home every hour first by radio and then by television. The commercial presses found it good business; but weary readers found it a good book. It is not a book to put one to sleep; but if one is a supernumerary sleeper (and the phrase can mean one who is sleeping when he should be awake), then Walden will be better than a locomotive for waking one up.

There is one other consideration. In coming up from Chapel Hill, one enters at Petersburg, Virginia, the population complex that has been officially designated as a single urban area along the Atlantic seaboard from Portland, Maine, to Norfolk, Virginia. It extends almost to Chapel Hill on the south and well beyond Concord on the north. It required a new name, for it is more than a metropolitan area, it is a vast stretch of land from state to state being urbanized. The new name is "megapolis," which sounds bigger and uglier than "metropolis." The thing itself is bigger and uglier. Its problems of water supply and rapid transit and traffic are bigger and uglier also. This Atlantic megapolis has suburbs, or --since it is like a spreading fungus--tentacles and excrescences. One tentacle, for example reaches westward through Pittsburgh and Buffalo to Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago, unless, indeed, the American side of the Great Lakes doesn't constitute in its own right a separate megapolis. Southern California, reaching eastward from Los Angeles is another megapolis. Unless it is a contradiction in linguistics, there are little megapolises springing up all over the country. Even as rural a state as North Carolina groups Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill into what is called "The Research Triangle" and a string of manufacturing cities along one railway into "The Piedmont Crescent." And when we can conjure up some more geometric figures we will add to triangle and crescent an urban parabola and a congested rhombus--which will give rise to the rhombus bus problem.

The result of these fantastic population configurations is the steady and accelerating pushing of nature away from the people. The macadam jungles are bad enough; the new "high rise" way of living brings privacy to a new low; the thirst for water eats (or drinks) upon itself until cities reuse water several times over; the mere matter of getting to work and home again becomes so complicated for residents of suburbia that they choke their own roads with cars and are effectually tripped up by their own traps--though no one should get on the road in a trap these days. This results from nothing more than an attempt to move around within the megapolis. An attempt to move out to where nature still survives is more difficult. And moving farther out to where nature not only survives but flourishes untrammeled is all but impossible.

Somewhere in Kansas there is one square mile of prairie which a plough has never touched and where prarie grass still grows. Somewhere in northeastern Minnesota there is a forest preserve where no road penetrates, no campers or hunters or fishermen are allowed, and no airplanes light on the lakes. In California there is a redwood grove that is being cut in half by a superhighway and that may all be lost to the lumbermen if a reluctant Congress does not move soon to save it. And in northern Indiana there are a few sand dunes east of Gary that may similarly slip through the government's slow fingers because the steel companies say the land is needed for docks for the ore boats. So with difficulty and against odds we try to keep a little nature unsullied. And that was not easy recently even at Walden Pond, as we well know.

We have become a crowded country within the memory of those of us not yet of three score years and ten. We did not think it could happen here; and then it happened so fast that "population explosion" is the only phrase we can use to describe it. Suddenly we realize that we have sold our birthright of the future for a mess of pottage of the present. This will go hard with us. We have been an ample country that had all outdoors, and our character has matched our horizon and been expansive. It will not be easy for us to be cribbed, cabined, and confined in some Old World fashion, for we shall have to change our character first. In the half century ahead it may be just as difficult to be a megapolis nation fighting for a place in the shade as it will be to change our nature by giving up national sovereignty in order to join the federation of the world. It will involve a tremendous adjustment for which we have not had time to prepare. It seemed to us that we had all nature for our dowry, that it was inexhaustible; and suddenly we find it being exhausted and begin to fight for room. In the first pages of his book Nature Emerson was so sure that nature was inexhaustible that he wrote that man's "operations taken together are so insignificant, a little chipping, baking, patching, and washing, that in an impression so grand as that of the world on the human mind, they do not vary the result." He was wrong. The little chipping chipped away whole landscapes. The baking left baked city streets and glaring six and eight lane highways. The patching has hardly given us parks, not to mention countrysides. And the washing is still to be done to the fouled air and the polluted rivers.

Meanwhile Thoreau in 1851 in a lecture here

in Concord before the Lyceum anticipated our problem and our need for the preservation of the wild, and put himself not only in the westward stream of American expansion but in advance of his time by saying that "in wildness is the preservation of the world." It must have seemed a humorous whimsey to the 1851 audience or to the 1862 readers of the resultant essay "Walking" to be told that the Milldam and the east side of the town represented overpopulation while Conantum or the Ministerial Swamp represented wildness; but of course in a very small way perceptible only to a man as sensitive as a poet, that is exactly what they did represent. It was not hard perhaps during the 1850's to think that even a saunter to the western town line partook of the nation's migration westward, for there were westward-bound people passing through Concord or leaving Concord every day.

But it took imagination in the 1850's, when so many people were trying to conquer what seemed limitless wilderness, to speak a word for wildness--a word that the 1950's would begin to understand. Not even Whitman in the 1850's had that much imagination; his nature is surprisingly tamed, his America is always populated, even over-populated. It took Thoreau's kind of imagination to find this wildness and derive its philosophy from the little town of Concord. He found here in this place

> "A township where one primitive forest waves above while another primitive forest rots below--such a town is fitted to raise not only corn and potatoes, but poets and philosophers for the coming ages. In such a soil grew Homer and Confucius and the rest, and out of such a wilderness comes the reformer eating locusts and wild honey."

I am not sure that Thoreau ate locusts (though he would have given them a try); but I know he ate wild honey.

Henry Thoreau was a reformer like an Old Testament prophet. He referred things to his own time and to this place, but he spoke for the reforms of later time and any place. Civil disobedience came into its own in our lifetime, not in his. The reforms of commerce and the awakening of labor came in the latter days of railways and technology, not in his day of the beginnings. And an understanding of the values of wildness and wilderness came when that environment was almost gone, not when it was abundantly here. Here was a perceptive traveler who not only traveled much in Concord but who started here on a journey into our time and who is still up ahead of us somewhere.

THE 1966 ANNUAL MEETING . . . .

The 1966 annual meeting of the Thoreau Society was held in the First Parish Church in Concord, Mass., on Saturday, July 9th. Coffee was served from 9 o'clock on under the direction of Mrs. Robert Needham. The meeting was called to order at 10:30 by the president, Mrs. Herbert Hosmer. David Emerson, great-grandson of Ralph Waldo Emerson, welcomed the members to Concord. "Fuzzy" Fenn had decorated the church with wildflowers and a display of turtle eggs. The secretary's report was accepted as printed in the Summer, 1965, bulletin. The following treasurer's report was read and accepted:

On hand, June 18, 1965		$3392
Income:		
Dues	1167	
Sale of Back cop.	423	
Life members.	675.	
Luncheon	197	
Total	2462	
Expenses:		
Annual meet.	311	
Postage	442	
Printing	1629	
Sec. aid	102	
Misc.	30	
	2514	
On hand, July 6, 1966		$3440

It was voted that the society contribute $1000 for the purchase of two acres of land in the Esterbrooks Woods for the Concord Field Station of the Museum of Comparative Zoology of Harvard University as a memorial to Henry David Thoreau. This land will be preserved "forever wild" for ecological study and the enjoyment of future generations.

The Save Walden Committee was authorized to pay $50 for the erection of a plaque at Walden Pond indicating it to be designated as a "National Landmark" by the United States Department of Interior.

An invitation was read from the newly formed Thoreau Foundation for Thoreau Society members to visit the new Thoreau Lyceum on Belknap St.

The nominating committee (Albert Bussewitz, Eric Parkman Smith, Laurence E. Richardson, chairman) submitted the following slate of officers:

G.Russell Ready, Berwick, Ont., president
Reginald L. Cook, Middlebury, Vt., president-elect.
Robert F. Needham, Concord, vice-president
Walter Harding, Geneseo, N.Y., secretary-treas.
Brooks Atkinson, Durham, N.Y.; Reginald L. Cook, Middlebury, Vt.; and Leonard Kleinfeld, Forest Hills, L.I., executive committee.

and they were duly elected.

Mrs. Herbert Hosmer delivered the presidential address on "The Resident Amateur in Concord." Prof. Raymond Adams spoke on "Thoreau's Return to Concord." A luncheon was served in the church vestry after which Mrs. Edmund Fenn conducted a walking tour of the Estabrook Country and Mrs. Caleb Wheeler conducted a tour of Concord's historic sites. At the evening meeting Mrs. Fenn showed colored slides of the Estabrook Country and Mr. Thomas Flint of Concord, chairman of the new Estabrooks Country committee announced that the Thoreau Society gift of $1,000 had been matched by the Ford Foundation.

As an antidote to the annual meeting, we conclude our report with an editorial by Peter G. Fradley from the PROVIDENCE [R.I.] EVENING BULLETIN for June 22, 1966, reprinted with the kind permission of the Providence Journal-Bulletin:

in perspective

'Each new year is a surprise' to all of us

Who knows what Henry David Thoreau would say if he could be present at the silver anniversary meeting of The Thoreau Society on July 9 in Concord, Mass.?

The great naturalist-poet-philosopher did not think much of organizations. "I thrive best on solitude," he said. But he responded favorably to those in tune with his individualism so the chances are he would not he too hard on the 600 or more members of the society, many of whom meet once a year because of their deep interest in his writings.

Let's for the fun of it suppose he will attend the meeting next month, accompanied by yours truly whom Thoreau has sworn to secrecy as to his identity.

He and I have slipped into seats at the rear of the old First Parish Church in Concord where the meeting is held and the proceedings have begun. We are, of course, on a first name basis.

"Are you not pleased, Henry, by all these people who hold you in such high esteem?" I whisper to him.

He leans toward me and gives his reply: "A man cannot be said to succeed in this life who does not satisfy one friend."

Umm, that's true, I tell myself. But

wait until the speeches begin; his ears will burn. He probably won't sit it out. He never did like being indoors, anyway, winter or summer.

"It's fine that you could be here, Henry," I tell him. "I'm only sorry the others could not meet you, too. It would be a great thrill for them."

"Labor lost," he answered, "for one of this generation to talk with a man of the old school. You might have done a solid work the meanwhile with a contemporary."

But I protest. "You are as much if not more of this generation than any of us here," I say, and I think I see a faint smile.

But as the meeting progresses, his face becomes more and more cloudy as the eulogies and references to his achievements grow more heated. This man who more than a century ago had informed the world that "the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation" now seems quietly desperate himself.

In a voice that exceeds a whisper and with some temperament, he turns to me and says, "I would rather be the barrenest pasture lying fallow than cursed with the compliments of kings."

Suddenly faces turn in our direction. Heads lean together, and there is much excited whispering. I tell him that I think we are discovered and that if he does not wish to be consumed we had better slip out with as little fuss as possible; and he seems delighted to escape. He says it is just as well that we leave because "I fear this particular dry knowledge may effect my imagination and fancy." To this he adds, "Some men have a peculiar taste for bad words."

Well, I tell him I think it is a little harsh to call them bad words and the proceedings dry. It really is a very pleasant time for the society, I say—people all interested in his works convening to talk about him and to commend each other's interpretation of various passages from *Walden* or *The Week* or his *Journal*. And Concord seems to enjoy this annual tribute to one of its famous forebears. And with some immodesty he replies: "A village needs these innocent stimulants of bright and cheery prospects to keep off melancholy and superstition."

Yes, I say, and do you not find uplifting the thought that you are the cause of this? He pauses and then replies: "In the society of many men, or in the midst of what is called success, I find my life of no account, and my spirits rapidly fall."

Perhaps he notices a sign from me that I am a little relieved to hear words of modesty because he hastens to add: "Now if there are any who think that I am vainglorious, that I set myself up above others and crow over their low estate, let me tell them that I could tell a pitiful story respecting myself as well as them if my spirits held out to do it; I could encourage them with a sufficient list of failures, and could flow as humbly as the very gutters themselves; I could enumerate a list of as rank offenses as ever reached the nostrils of heaven; that I think worse of myself than they can possibly think of me, being better acquainted with the man. I put the best face on the matter. I tell them this secret," he says, "if they will not tell it to anybody else."

He thanked me for accompanying him but said that he must now go off by himself. "The man I meet with is not often so instructive as the silence he breaks. This stillness, solitude, wildness of nature is a kind of thoroughwort, or boneset, to my intellect. This is what I go out to seek."

I say goodby and tell him I hope we shall meet again some day. "Each new year is a surprise to us," he says and strolls off down the road toward Walden Woods—and inside the church the society continues its deliberations.

P. G. F.

THOREAU SOCIETY ARCHIVES . . .

We are happy to announce the gift to the Thoreau Society Archives by Miss Edith Davidson Harris of Walpole, New Hampshire, of the following volumes, many of them from the library of her father, William Torrey Harris, the first United States Commissioner of Education, an intimate friend of Bronson Alcott and an acquaintance of Thoreau: Walden (1854), Letters to Various Persons (1865), Yankee in Canada (1866), Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers (1868?), Cape Cod (1883), Spring (1883), Summer (1884), Winter (1888), Familiar Letters (1894), Channing's Thoreau (1873), Sanborn's Thoreau (1882) and Canby's Thoreau (1939). Our archivist, Mrs. Caleb Wheeler, notes that the copy of Walden is heavily marked in the margins, apparently to indicate favorite passages, that the phrase on p. 12 has been changed from "walking all the while he talks" to "talking all the while he walks" (which would seem to make more sense, actually), and that on p. 14, the word "faith" in the 5th line has been changed to "fate" (which makes less sense).

We are also happy to announce the gift of five handsomely bound scrapbooks for use in preserving clippings of current Thoreauviana, by Mr. Leonard Kleinfeld of Forest Hills, L.I.

'THE RIVALS' AS A POSSIBLE SOURCE FOR WALDEN

We owe our humblest apologies to Professor James Stronks of the University of Illinois (Chicago) for inadvertently omitting his name as author from the note of this title in the spring bulletin.

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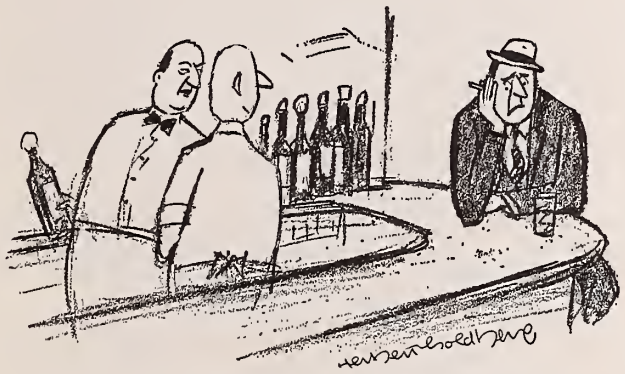

'As soon as he starts on "Walden Pond" he's had enough.'

—The National Observer

Reprinted, with permission from THE NATIONAL OBSERVER for May 2, 1966.

We are indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin: H.Adel,E.Anderson,T.Bailey, M.Campbell,B.Gronewald,E.Hunsaker,D.Harrison,G. Hosmer,D.Kamen-Kaye,A.Kovar,N.Lehrman,H.Meyer,D. Patten,W.Peterson,R.Schaedle,M.Sherwood,S.Wellman, H.Wiggins,M.Wahl,and R.Wheeler. Please keep your secretary informed of new Thoreau items as they appear.

The following have recently become life members of the Thoreau Society: Mr. Clarence Buck, Garrett Park, Md.; Mrs. A.G. Davenport, Jamestown, R.I.; Mrs. Thomas F. Gossett, Lewisburg, W.Va.; Mr. Richard H.Green, Spencer, Mass.; Mr. Earl Hunsaker, Madison Heights, Mich.; and Mr. & Mrs. Robert Moore, Concord, Mass. Life memberships are $25.00.

WALDEN AND THE SAMHITA OF THE SAMA VEDA by William Bysshe Stein (Harpur College)

An important unidentified quotation in Walter Harding's The Variorum Walden calls attention to a Hindu influence on Thoreau's conception of "awakening" in Chapter II: "The Veds say, 'All intelligences awake with the morning.'" (p. 88) The passage is extracted from a hymn to dawn found in J. Stevenson's Translation of the Samhita of the Sama Veda (1841):

> These intelligence-giving rays of morn spread light over the eastern aerial region; and the moving, creative, generative, morning rays, arch forth like strong men arrayed in armour. The resplendent rays proceed forward with freedom, and, self-yoked, the glowing beams unite themselves (to the chariot). All intelligences awake with the morning, and the afore-mentioned rays of the brilliant (goddess) pay their respects to the radiant Sun. The sacrifice-receiving Aurora is worshipped by one effort, even from afar, and brings food without fail to the pious bountiful master of the moon-plant banquet. (Nineteenth Adhyaya, 16)

The address to Aurora (actually Ushas) is crucial because it climaxes the moment of spiritual illumination connected with the Soma-sacrifice, an oblation cast into the sacred fire kept burning in the house of every devout Brahman. It is interesting to note that in this Samhita Soma is elevated to the position of the Supreme Spirit, the eternal liberating power of divine light as symbolized by the sun.

OLIVER ARB by Jerre Mangione . . . .

(Reprinted with permission from the May, 1966, issue of College Composition and Communication, courtesy of the National Council of Teachers of English and with revisions by the author.)

When Oliver Arb's first
and last novel, a prose
poem influenced by Thoreau,
got no reviews and only
twenty sales (fifteen by
blood relatives) he bought
the metal bookplates from
his publisher, and strapping them around his middle,
jumped straight into
Walden Pond.

NOTES AND QUERIES . . . .

R.P.Stevenson (R.D.2, Lebanon, N.J.), who is writing a book on American folk toys, asks if anyone knows how Thoreau made the "onion and squash pipes, and rhubarb whistles" he mentions in his letter of July 31, 1849 to Ellen Emerson.

A national convention of those interested in establishing Walden Two Communities (a la B. F. Skinner's novel) is being held on Walden Lake at the Waldenwoods Conference Center in Hartland, Mich., August 28-31. (Write Bill Sheppard, 1448 University Terrace, Apt. 522, Ann Arbor, Mich., for information.)

The Thoreau Lyceum (48 Belknap St., Concord) sells notepaper and stationery illustrated with quotations from Thoreau, and reproductions of S.S.Smith's steel engraving of the Rowse crayon portrait of Thoreau.

You may obtain a complimentary copy of THE TWAINIAN (devoted to Mark Twain as our bulletin is to Thoreau) by writing the Mark Twain Research Association, Perry, Mo. Annual subscription is $5.00.

The June page of the Esquire Calendar for 1966 (in the Dec. 1965 ESQUIRE) features a nude girl and a quotation from Thoreau!